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South Vietnam: Despite the low level of enemy shellings and ground attacks on 6-7 July, the Communists appear to be continuing preparations for their July "action phase."

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The government's military mobilization has reduced the pool of available qualified manpower to a point where the National Police cannot recruit enough personnel to meet their goal of a 92,000-man force. To help this situation, President Thieu recently instructed the Ministry of Defense to assign about 13,000 army personnel to the police.

For almost two years, the police have been unable to raise their strength above the 80,000 mark. Expansion of the force has been hindered by government reluctance to allocate sufficient funds to pay police now on the rolls. It has also been hampered by a requirement that the younger police officers serve in the Police Field Forces, a paramilitary element frequently exposed to combat in the rural areas.

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West Germany - USSR: Bonn is again trying to promote Soviet interest in bilateral political talks.

On 3 July, the Germans presented Soviet Ambassador Tsarapkin with the draft of a proposed exchange of declarations on the renunciation of force. Tsarapkin had earlier indicated an interest in this subject but, on receiving the draft, was noncommittal. He asked only when Bonn was going to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

Foreign Minister Brandt sought out Tsarapkin on various occasions during 1967 and 1968 in an effort to find areas wherein tensions between Bonn and Moscow could be reduced. The West German initiative lapsed in the wake of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Brandt, a Social Democrat, probably chose this time to launch a new effort in order to stress the Eastern policy theme before the campaign leading up to the September national election. The initiative reportedly was cleared with Chancellor Kiesinger, a Christian Democrat, who accepts the general premise of trying to find an opening to the East but who probably sees little chance that the Soviets will respond positively at this time.

The German draft pledges Bonn not to use force to bring about reunification or to alter the borders of the Federal Republic. It seeks in effect a Soviet relinquishment of claimed rights of intervention in West Germany under the UN Charter. The draft also renews previous West German offers to exchange renunciation of force declarations with East Germany, but avoids any implied recognition of the Ulbricht regime.

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El Salvador - Honduras: Efforts are under way to establish a buffer zone to prevent further border incidents.

Nicaraguan, Guatemalan, and Costa Rican mediators are giving priority to a plan to have El Salvador and Honduras draw their troops back from the border and accept military observers from the Central American Defense Council in the resulting six-mile buffer zone. Honduras has agreed, but no reply has yet come from El Salvador.

Although the two feuding countries have accepted in principle the Central American mediation efforts, neither has accepted the comprehensive eight-point mediation plan. This plan, in addition to requiring troop withdrawals, calls for normalization of commercial relations, suppression of inflammatory news reports, investigation of and compensation for damages suffered by nationals of both countries, and negotiation of a Central American immigration treaty that would provide a multilateral solution to the problem of Salvadoran overpopulation.

Salvadoran Foreign Minister Guerrero has stated that the eight-point plan is completely unacceptable, chiefly because it tends to lay blame equally on both countries. Guerrero said the Sanchez government would not last 24 hours if the plan were accepted. Honduran acceptance of the full mediation plan appears to be conditioned on Salvadoran acceptance of the troop withdrawal proposal.

The Council of the Organization of American States, which considered the problem on 4 July, deferred action to give Central American mediation a chance to work. The council is to meet again on 10 July, and it may assume a greater role if no progress has been made by then.



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Costa Rica: The Communist Party is continuing efforts to register a front group to participate in the general election next February.

Last week the supreme electoral tribunal rejected the Bloc of Workers, Peasants, and Intellectuals (Bloque) on technical grounds but reiterated that only the legislature has competence to outlaw the party as a Communist front. The tribunal and the legislature have tossed the issue back and forth for several months, creating a web of legal and jurisdictional questions as to the party's status.

The Communists expect to be able to meet the tribunal's requirements before the deadline on 1 August [redacted]

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If they fail, they plan to collaborate with a radical leftist party led by Marcial Aguiluz Orellana. Aguiluz' organization was proscribed for the 1966 election, but has since registered under a new name. The legislature, despite its reluctance, may yet be forced to take a stand on the Communist issue. [redacted]

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Greece: The government's recent conflict with the State Council has further tarnished the regime's image abroad, but also proves that such conflicts can be weathered over the short run.

The clash began in mid-June when the State Council, Greece's highest court, reinstated 21 judges purged by the government in late 1968. The government dismissed council president Stasinopoulos after he refused to step down voluntarily. Several other judges on the council resigned in protest.

The government then overruled all decisions taken by the council after 1 June, and named an inspector general, or "ombudsman," as guardian of civil rights. This function had been the major responsibility of the council. Most of the 21 judges have been prevented from returning to their posts, and one has been arrested, as have the three lawyers who represented the judges before the State Council. The government also recalled its ambassadors to Paris and London because they reportedly stated that Stasinopoulos' ouster would have adverse effects on Greece's position abroad.

The Greek people by now probably retain few illusions about their government, so the major effect of the conflict will be a further deterioration of the regime's image abroad.

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